AN APPEAL

TO

POPULAR OPINION,

AGAINST

KIDNAPPING AND MURDER;

INCLUDING

A NARRATIVE

OF

The late Atrocious Proceedings,

AT

Yarmouth;

WITH

The Statements, Hand-Bills, &c. pro and con.

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AN APPEAL, &c.

Introduction.

THERE is, perhaps, no ſingle point of view, in which the affairs of Britain can, at this time, be regarded, which does not exhibit a proſpect, more melancholy and alarming, than has ever exiſted ſince the æra of the Revolution. A mad and profligate ſyſtem of continental politics has exhauſted the reſources of the nation, has drained it of its population and energy, and, what is ſtill worſe, has "ſlain the mind" of the country—has deſtroyed the proud zeal of boaſted liberty, which once elevated the character of the people; and by aſſociating them with the ſlaves of tyrants, and in the cauſe of tyranny, has rendered them degraded in their own eyes, and contemptible in thoſe of Europe. The vaunted ſuperiority of Britiſh valour is no more: Britain has loſt her liberty; and it has been proved, that nations are only valiant in proportion as they are free. France, once the object of our ſcorn, has become our terror. She ſlept in ſlavery, and we ſcoffed at her weakneſs. She felt the Promethian torch of Liberty, and ſhe has ſhown her giant might. She burſt her chains, and Europe

confederated in arms to bind them on again: a fourth part of her own children proved rebellious to the holy cauſe of Freedom, and another fourth were neceſſarily employed to keep the rebels in check; and yet, with the remaining half, renovated France has vanquiſhed the whole continent; and Britain, whoſe profligate miniſters brewed the infernal ſtorm, ſtands upon the brink of her yet unravaged ſhores, pondering, with anxious expectation, over the fate in which ſhe may be involved by the next exploſion. Yes; the ſtorm thickens; cloud gathers to cloud; combuſtion to combuſtion. The interior of France is no more diſtracted. The banditti of La Vendi are no more in our alliance. The bayonets of Britany are turned againſt us. The pikes of the Chouans, and the ſcythes of the no-longer deluded peaſants point, with threatening impatience, towards our ſhores; and a ſwarm of profligate and deſperate emigrants are waiting, perhaps, for an opportunity to make their peace with their country, by plunging the ſword into the boſom that foſtered them. In the mean time, the irritated Republic encloſes us with a moon-like battery; a narrow ſea is all that ſeparates this enervated, diſpirited, and exhauſted nation from the legions which have broken in pieces the diſciplined phalanx of Germany, and trampled in the duſt the military glory of centuries; and on this *precarious* element the navies of France, Spain and Holland combine for our humiliation. At home the ſinews of power are torn aſunder.—Our population is exhauſted, our manufactures are palſied, our commerce is threatened with annihilation, our public credit is ſhaken to its foundations, our ſpecie is vaniſhing, paper circulation maintains its ſtandard with difficulty, our loan contractors are reduced

to every ſhuffling expedient to fulfil, or to poſtpone, their engagements with Government, and the funds themſelves, if not "in the gulph," are, at leaſt, "on the very verge of bankruptcy;" while the public creditors behold with terror, that, if they ſhould dare to aſſociate or meet for the purpoſe of deviſing means for the ſecurity of their property, the miniſters and their myrmidons are armed with authority to diſperſe them by proclamation, or pay off their demands by military execution.

At the ſame time, the ſtate is diſeaſed in every pore. Order and government exiſt no longer to any beneficial purpoſe. Taxes, it is true, are levied, malcontents are dragooned, highwaymen are hanged, and magiſtrates are protected by troops of guards, and carriages made bullet proof; but the peace of ſociety is not preſerved; nor is the life, the property, or the privilege of the Citizen protected from fraud or ſavage depredation. The police is organized into a complete ſyſtem Eſpionage, and ſpies and informers are marſhalled and ſtationed in every diſtrict: but while opinions are fettered, crimes go free; and in every claſs and ſituation of ſociety are to be found daring banditti who act, in the broad face of day, upon the maxim promulgated from the treaſury bench, and, confiding in the connivance or the impotence of magiſtracy, "exert an authority beyond the law."

To what inſults and depredations is not the country ſubjected? And what can be the ſource of this horrible depravity? We talk of civilization; but the moſt dreadful barbariſm pre-

vails. Twenty four millions of money are annually paid for government; and a moſt enormous debt is contracted by our legiſlators and rulers; the priſons are crammed, and gibbets are inceſſantly groaning; and yet Weſtminſter Juſtices are filling huge octavoes with catalogues of incorrigible offences; and provincial mayors behold, by the long hour, banditti of plunderers and armed aſſaſſins committing every attrocious depredation upon promiſcuous multitudes of men, women and children, and ſuffer them at laſt, to retire, uninterrupted in martial array, chaunting the ſongs of victory, and bearing the trophies of their premeditated violence, in triumph to their ſhips.

"There is ſomething rotten in the ſtate of Denmark"—ſome vital diſeaſe in the very bowels of the ſyſtem, when ſuch things can be acted: ſomething I fear which nothing leſs than complete renovation can eradicate. The renovation, however, may come even from the inveterate obſtinacy of the malady itſelf. In the mean time, palliatives may be ſought, but I fear they will be ſought in vain.

In the inſtance of the particular ſymptom which gives riſe to this pamphlet, I underſtand a partial remedy of this kind will be attempted. A court of law will be applied to for redreſs, by ſome of the injured parties. I am glad it will be ſo; becauſe ſuch application will at leaſt give publicity to the facts, and place an authenticated ſtatement of the affair upon record. But further than this, I freely confeſs, that I deſpair of juſtice in ſuch a caſe. If juſtice were adminiſtered with an even hand, ſuch events never could take place. And where they can take place, what is the meaning of

government and *civilized ſociety?* To talk of compenſation in a court of law, is mockery and inſult. There is no compenſation for broken limbs, for kidnapping and murder. And if there were, how is it to be ſought? Several of the perſons, injured in this wicked outrage, are fortunately men of conſiderable property: but would they have been leſs entitled to redreſs if they had been labourers and mechanics? And yet how would ſuch men have been able to advance their hundreds—perhaps thouſands, for the proſecution of public depredators, or conniving magiſtrates? For my own part I confeſs, I muſt leave to others, who can afford to purchaſe it, the coſtly luxury of legal juſtice, while I, with democratical frugality, appeal to the more acceſſible tribunal of public opinion.

NARRATIVE.

THE nation is, I truſt, by this time aware, and the adviſers of thoſe meaſures are evidently not ignorant, that the late Acts, by which our conſtitutional liberties have been ſo alarmingly invaded, are totally inadequate to the ſuppreſſion of thoſe principles of Truth and Political Juſtice, which animate the ſoul and direct the labours of the ſincere Reformer. Political Aſſociations are, in reality, rather organized than prohibited. More than forty-nine perſons muſt not, it is true, meet together for the diſcuſſion of grievances in church and ſtate, or to petition for the repeal of any obnoxious law, without the controlling cenſorſhip of a Magiſtrate: but every village, town, and ſtreet, may have its *ſociety of forty-nine;* and theſe may legally confederate together, by deputations, committees, and ſub-committees; and if the delegations are but ſo organized and divided, that more than the ſpecific number do not meet together, there is no legal impediment to prevent the whole nation from being combined in one grand political Aſſociation, or Correſponding Society, from the Orkneys to the Thames, from the Cliffs of Dover to the Land's End, in Cornwall. Whether the exigences, or the ſpirit of the nation, will produce ſo grand an affiliation, time muſt reveal; but I will venture to pronounce, that it would not be the leſs powerful for being divided into ſections of forty-nine.

In the mean time it behoves us, in all ſtates of ſociety, and eſpecially in the preſent, to conſider what are the means of public inſtruction; and if much is taken away from us, to make a diligent application of whatever may ſtill remain. In this reſpect, alſo, we ſhall find that ſome very valuable provinces of political information ſtill lay open before us; and that if the minds of our fellow Citizens do not continue to be improved in the principles of Legiſlation, and a knowledge of the arts and corruptions of Governments, it muſt be from the want of courage on the one hand, and curioſity on the other, and not from any moral impracticability or legal prevention. Reaſon may be ſaid, it is true, to be curbed and reſtricted in her career; but the ſpeed of the generous coarſer is rather urged than impeded by the bitt; and perhaps the philoſopher would rather rejoice than repine at being compelled to abandon perſonality for principle, local prejudices for univerſal philanthropy, and temporary feelings for the ſteady and immutable dictates of Nature: and ſuch is, in ſome degree, the caſe with the moral and political inſtructor, who prohibited from ſpeculating on the events and practices of his own time and country, is neceſſitated to purſue his principle through the regions of ancient and foreign hiſtory. The queſtion is then no longer of Pitt or Fox, of Paine or Brunſwick; but of right or wrong, juſt or unjuſt, wiſe or unwiſe. Partialities and Reſentments loſe their force; the miſts of paſſion are diſſipated, and the temple of truth is ſeen through a clearer atmoſphere.

Such are the circumſtances under which we are placed by the new Acts, with reſpect to oral

inveſtigation. Every man who will take the trouble to make himſelf acquainted with ancient or foreign hiſtory, may diſcuſs, with the utmoſt freedom, every political principle, and every queſtion connected with the good government and permanent happineſs of the human race. He muſt not apply his arguments, it is true, to this particular country, nor illuſtrate them by the flying reports and occurrences of the day; but ancient hiſtory will abundantly furniſh him with illuſtrations, much more intereſting to the ſtrong and noble feelings of the heart; and if the Orator is at all adroit in the management of his ſubject, he will find reaſon to exult in the many and grand advantages for the diſplay of genuine and impaſſioned eloquence, which hiſtorical diſcuſſion poſſeſſes over the local topics to which our public ſpeakers have hitherto confined their attention.

In conformity with theſe reflections, the bills had no ſooner paſſed, than I determined to reſume my ſtation in the tribune, and having, in my "Proſpectus of a Courſe of Lectures," &c. ſhown the legality of ſuch an expedient, to illuſtrate by example, the doctrine I had laid down, and *once more* to break through the charm of timid ſilence, which the wizard arm of miniſterial terror had impoſed upon the nation. To me, indeed, if I may be allowed to ſay ſo, this experiment particularly belonged. In the great ſtruggle of Freedom againſt power, every man ſhould chuſe his particular province, and fight his particular battle: and, though he ſhould at all times be ready to render aſſiſtance wherever it may be required, he ſhould take eſpecial care that his own poſt is not undefended. The province in which my taſtes, my habits, and the circum-

ſtances under which I have been placed, ſeem to have enabled me to be moſt uſefully employed, is the vindication of the ſacred LIBERTY OF SPEECH: and if I am diſpoſed to indulge the proud boaſt of having twice, with unaſſiſted effort, recovered this important ſtation, when apparently ſubjected and deſtroyed by municipal intrigue, and miniſterial uſurpation, it may abate the edge of envy to recollect the dangers, the difficulties, and the heart-achs with which my laurels have been reaped, and ſtill muſt be maintained.

There was another reaſon, alſo, which particularly called upon me on this occaſion. It was evident from the tenor of the Bills alluded to, and from the groſs and ſlanderous miſrepreſentations of my conduct and ſentiments reiterated during the diſcuſſion, from the treaſury bench, and by the treaſury ſcribblers, that a principal object with the firſt adviſers of theſe meaſures was to ſtop my tongue entirely, and conſign me to ignominious ſilence, with a load of obloquy upon my *offending* head. It was my duty, therefore, as much as poſſible, to prevent the liberties of my country from being wounded through my ſides; and, if I muſt, indeed, be ſilenced, to drive thoſe men who are afraid of the truths I utter, to avow at once their object and their fears, by enacting, in direct terms, "that John Thelwall ſhall open his mouth in public no more." Till they have been thus explicit, I truſt I ſhall find means to propagate my principles: for I feel an honeſt confidence, that my principles are ſuch, as not even the preſent adminiſtration would venture at once fairly to ſtate and openly to condemn. They

are principles, indeed, which corruption muſt, of neceſſity dread, but which corruption does not dare to publiſh to the world, in prohibitory Laws and Parliamentary Debates: for ſuch is the moral beauty of truth, that ſhe need but be ſeen in her native ſymplicity, to be admired by all but thoſe who have an intereſt in upholding deformity, vice, and impoſture. Such is the reaſon why the apparently unbounded power of the ruling faction has ſo frequently been impotent in its reſentments: for what they wiſhed to deſtroy, it was impoſſible to condemn; and being obliged to depend upon the bugbears of miſrepreſentation, they have been bewildered among the monſters themſelves created; and, ſtriking at their own pageants, what wonder if their blows have not reached their intended victims.

The nature of the Courſe of Lectures I determined to deliver under this new arrangement, was ſufficiently explained in the "Proſpectus" before referred to, and its legality was ſo evident that, though I never diſſembled that my object was to inſtruct my hearers in the principles of Government, and the nature of political inſtitution, the Magiſtrates, the Crown Lawyers, and the Government Reporters acquieſced, and left me to the uninterrupted purſuit of my plan; and, if report ſays true, the great Divan itſelf, after ſolemn deliberation, admitted that my Law was ſound, and my interpretation of the ſtatute incontrovertible.

Having eſtabliſhed my point in London, I was perſuaded to turn my eyes towards the provinces, and accepted an invitation to the city of Norwich, where a courſe of two and twenty lectures has been delivered to an audience, com-

poſed of all the different claſſes of ſociety, and, with a degree of impreſſion, ſurpaſſing any thing I have ever witneſſed before, in any place, or upon any occaſion. My ſtay in this City was alſo endeared by the intercourſe of a moſt agreeable and intelligent circle of ſociety, and the flattering conviction that the prejudices ſo artfully excited againſt me, were regularly diminiſhed in proportion as my real ſentiments and feelings became more generally known. In the mean time I was not indifferent to the general intereſts of liberty, and the importance of political aſſociations in particular, in the ſurrounding neighbourhoods; and I neglected no opportunity that offered of meeting *any legal number* of the friends of freedom, for the purpoſe of explaining the reſtrictions and proviſions of the late acts, and pointing out to them under what circumſtances they might ſtill aſſociate, and what means were ſtill left for the promotion of the great work of Parliamentary Reform.

With a view to this object I paid a ſhort viſit to Yarmouth, where two parties were formed, one in the morning, and the other in the afternoon, for the purpoſe of meeting me; each of them conſiſting of *leſs than fifty perſons*. At the latter of theſe ſome people were preſent, who have been generally ranked with what is called the moderate party: nor were theſe the characters leaſt pleaſed with the ſentiments I endeavoured to enforce. In ſhort, they were men of real moderation; and the circumſtance is not, therefore, ſurpriſing: for there is not a term in the Engliſh language which has been more wickedly abuſed than this. Moderation of temper is certainly a moſt excellent quality, and no man can be a friend to human li-

berty, who does not preſerve it with benevolent ſolicitude; but moderation of principle is ſheer nonſenſe: or, more properly ſpeaking, rank hypocriſy. In plain fact, every principle is either right or wrong; and between right and wrong there is no mid-way, no moderation! But what is moſt remarkable is that the *moderes* in principle are, in general, moſt ſanguinary in their ſentiments, as to the means of attaining their object. This is not extraordinary, for men, not meaſures, are their concern; and thoſe who wiſh only for a change of parties, may make their way through the blood of a rival faction; but the man of principle knows, that deſtroying the oppreſſor does not remove the oppreſſion; and that revenge is not reform. Add to which, that the man who is well-grounded in a conſiſtent principle, feels a neceſſary confidence in the omnipotency of reaſon, and has nothing to wiſh but that argument ſhould have full ſcope. The mere word moderation has, however, an inſeparable charm, and the epithet "violent" ſo frequently, though unjuſtly, applied to the thorough-paced reformer, has, undoubtedly, alienated many a ſincere and worthy man from the party of truth. In proportion as we come to be better underſtood, theſe deluſions will be diſſipated, and it will be found who are the true friends of moderation—the genuine advocates of peace, good order, and humanity. In conſequence of the impreſſion produced by this viſit, I received a ſecond invitation to Yarmouth, and had now the ſatisfaction to meet ſeveral perſons, who had not before mingled in our converſations; and who, from their characters, connections, and influence in the town, were looked up to with reſpect by the inhabitants in general. Two or three evenings hav-

ing been ſpent in this private manner, a mingled feeling of eſteem and indignation, as in ſeveral other inſtances that I might mention, was excited by the contraſt exhibited between the ſentiments and feelings evinced in my converſation, and thoſe which a baſe and intereſted miſrepreſentation has uſually aſcribed to perſons of our way of thinking, and to myſelf in particular; and a deſire was pretty generally expreſſed that my ſentiments ſhould be more publicly delivered. I accordingly conſented to change my ſubject, from Engliſh to Roman hiſtory, and to illuſtrate my principles to any number of perſons that ſhould chuſe to aſſemble; the perſons above alluded to being of opinion, that there was no probability of any attempt towards diſturbance, *among the people of the town*; and who could ſuſpect that in a place, protected by two regiments of ſoldiers, a corporation of grave magiſtrates, and a regular police, a body of ſailors could have been deputed from on board the ſhips of war in the roads for the purpoſes of tumult and outrage?

It will be naturally ſuppoſed, that I was in ſome degree gratified to find that curioſity was rather inflamed, than ſatiated by this compliance; and that I readily aſſented to the propoſition with which it was followed, that I ſhould ſhortly return to the town, and deliver a *Courſe of Lectures* on Claſſical Hiſtory there: eſpecially when this invitation was accompanied with the offer of a warehouſe belonging to one of the principal merchants in the place, and a liberal ſubſcription to fit it up for my accommodation. To have refuſed ſuch an invitation, would have been inconſiſtent with the zeal I have always profeſſed for the ſpread of information. Several of my friends at Norwich, it

is true, were apprehenſive that ſome perſonal violence would be attempted by the rancorous ariſtocrats, who, it was ſuſpected, might find in the veſſels laying in the roads, fit inſtruments of their diabolical vengeance. I was, however, diſpoſed to believe, that ſuch attempts ſurpaſſed the profligacy of the Britiſh character; and, taking only the precaution of being conſtantly armed, I obeyed the ſummons of duty, and repaired to a place, where every circumſtance had convinced me, that if there was ſome danger to be encountered, there was much good to be done.

The ſtate of ſociety in Yarmouth is indeed one, in which great advantage to the cauſe of liberty is to be expected from any undertaking that may tend to provoke diſcuſſion. There is, indeed, as might be expected, a great deal of torpor and lethargy among the people; but there is at the ſame time leſs vulgarity and brutal licentiouſneſs than I have ever ſeen before in any ſea-port town. (It is to be remarked, however, that it is but very lately that ſhips of war have been in the habit of laying in the roads.) There is, alſo, a ſort of comparative equality in the condition of the inhabitants. The links of the progreſſive chain of ſociety are not yet broken. There are no towering and gigantic fortunes on the one hand, and but little want and abject wretchedneſs on the other; and there is a good body of decent ſubſtantial families filling up the intermediate ſpace between the merchants and the mechanics. Into ſuch a ſtate of ſociety, particular circumſtances may occaſion it to be long before a knowledge of juſt and liberal principles finds its way; but when ſuch principles are once adopted, through a ſociety ſo conſtituted they muſt of courſe be rapidly diffuſed. The only

circumſtance unfavourable to the cultivation of juſt notions of liberty, is the influence of the corporation. This inſtitution is, of courſe, an ariſtocratic confederacy of alarmers and alarmiſts: and, what is ſtill worſe, from the character and ſituation of its members, it is of neceſſity dependent upon the faction in power, and has, therefore, a two-fold intereſt in terrifying the people from the purſuit of knowledge by the cabaliſtic yell of "Innovation and Anarchy!"* Their influence is, however, confined to the artificial advantages of their corporate character. As individuals, they have little of that ſway or intereſt which ariſes either from capacity, education, perſonal attachment, or even property; and the families moſt beloved for their good qualities, moſt eſteemed for their underſtandings, and moſt powerful by the extent of their commerce and connections, are in actual oppoſition to this *conſtituted club*, and obnoxious to them on account of the more liberal ſyſtem of politics, to which they have uniformly leaned. In ſhort, ſuch is the ſtate of ſociety in Yarmouth, that the principles of liberty need only to be underſtood, and they muſt be immediately adopted: for they are in perfect uniſon with the intereſts of almoſt every individual in the town, *their reverences* of the church, and *their worſhips* of the corporation alone excepted.

Such was the view of the ſubject which occaſioned me to accept with eagerneſs the invitation, and even to give Yarmouth the preference over ſome other more populous places to which I had been alſo invited; eſpecially, as at that time, it being the height of the watering ſea-

* It will be ſeen in the ſequel who are the real anarchiſts!

ſon, and the town full of company, from a variety of different quarters, I thought it probable that the principles I was anxious to promulgate might ſpread through a wider circle from ſuch a centre, than even in a place where a larger audience might be expected: a calculation, in which the attendance of the three firſt evenings proved I was not erroneous.

To Yarmouth, accordingly, I again repaired; and my Lectures were announced by the publication of the following bill, which was poſted in the moſt conſpicuous parts of the Town, and diſtributed among the inhabitants;—

"*Lectures on Claſſical Hiſtory, illuſtrative of the Principles of Legiſlation and Practices of Governments; in ſtrict conformity with Mr. Pitt's Convention Act.*

"*At the Lecture Room, on the Walls, in the South-end, Yarmouth, on Monday, Auguſt* 15, 1796, *John Thelwall will commence a Courſe of ſix Lectures, on the Hiſtory, Political Inſtitutions, and Revolutions of Rome.*

"*The Lectures will be delivered on Mondays, Wedneſdays, and Fridays.*"—*&c.*

That conſiderable animoſity was excited in the breaſts of the high-toned ariſtocratic party, by the publication of this bill I have no doubt: for I have been too deeply injured by the oppreſſors, ever to expect to be forgiven; and the tools of corruption need but half an eye to diſcover that it is impoſſible to deſcant with freedom upon any ſubject of hiſtory, or of morals, without unveiling the ſyſtem of fraud and uſurpation, and, conſequently, endangering their trade.

But whatever might be their animoſity, it is evident that their party in the town was very ſmall; for I walked about the ſtreets in the moſt public manner, without the leaſt inſult, both before and after the Lectures were commenced; and even after the outrage at the Lecture Room had been commited. In ſhort, it was evident that among the town's-people there was not the leaſt diſpoſition to tumult; and that if we could have procured a Room in the center, or the inland part of the Town, it would have been impoſſible for all the prieſts and exciſemen in the place to have occaſioned any diſturbance or interruption. But our ſituation towards the ſea, ſubjected us to many inconveniences and inſults; and at laſt to moſt atrocious outrage. A plot of moſt unparalleled atrocity was formed, againſt which it was impoſſible for us to be guarded; becauſe it was impoſſible for us to ſuſpect, on the one hand, that a project of ſuch mad and diabolical wickedneſs could have entered into the heads of any ſet of men; or, on the other, that the police of any civilized town could have ſuffered it to be carried into execution.

Where, or with whom, the plan firſt originated, or to what extent of wickedneſs it was intended to be carried, is not yet accurately known. That it was intended to carry me off is certain: but whether I was to have been murdered, or *only* tranſported to Siberia, further inveſtigation muſt aſcertain. To the Commander of one of the Ships of War, in the Roads, the plot is already traced; and it is now known that he had it in agitation for ſeveral days; that he invited ſome military Officers to join in the undertaking; and

that upon their refuſal, he determined to execute it himſelf. This ruffian, Captain Roberts, of L'Eſpiegle, (whom I have ſince ſeen, and who had the audacity, in the hearing of ſome perſons in company with me, to threaten a repetition of the outrage) ſtands poſitively charged with making a formal harangue to his crew, iſſuing his orders for the attack, ſending off his men in the ſhip's boats, to the number of five or ſix and thirty, (who were joined by others on the ſhore; the whole gang conſiſting, as has been aſcertained, of about ninety perſons) giving them directions with reſpect to furniſhing themſelves with bludgeons and other weapons for the purpoſe, and ſending ſome of the inferior officers to command them.

The banditti, thus armed, thus authoriſed, and thus marſhalled (after having had each as much brandy as he would drink,) ſet forward upon this honourable expedition, chaſing and chopping at every perſon in their way. One man in particular, who was ſtanding near the door, narrowly eſcaped with his life: for one of the officers chopped at his throat with a cutlaſs, and cut through the nots and folds of a ſilk handkerchief which was tied about his neck. They then attacked the door in a body, knocked down the door keepers, and ruſhed into the room. The ſcene that enſued has been very accurately deſcribed in the Courier of the enſuing Monday; and as I ſhall have occaſion hereafter to refer to that narrative, I ſhall here inſert it entire.

From the Courier, Monday, Auguſt, 22, 1796.

Yarmouth.—" On Friday evening laſt was exhibited at this place, a ſcene of tumult and ſangui-

nary wickedneſs, the moſt daring and atrocious which has ever diſgraced even the preſent æra of ferocity and terror, without excepting even the riots of Birmingham and Manchester. Hitherto the utmoſt fury of a Church and King mob had never gone further than the demolition of a few houſes, and a *threat* againſt the life of ſome obnoxious individual. To attempt the indiſcriminate maſſacre of a peaceful aſſembly of upwards of two hundred people, men, women and children, who were violating no law, and diſturbing no man's comforts or poſſeſſions, would have called a bluſh upon the cheek even of the *Septembrizers* of France. If there is any ſuch thing as juſtice left in the country, this affair muſt be made a ſubject of public inquiry; and if the aſſaſſins and conſpirators are not brought to condign puniſhment, to talk any more of the laws and liberties of Britons, will be adding inſult to oppreſſion.

" The hiſtory of the tranſaction is as follows: Thelwall, who has been for ſome time delivering a Courſe of Lectures on Claſſical Hiſtory, and particularly on the Laws and Revolutions of Rome, at Norwich, received a ſtrong invitation from ſeveral of the principal inhabitants of Yarmouth, to repeat a part of them, at leaſt, in that town. Mr. Hurry, one of the firſt merchants in the place, having lent one of his warehouſes for the purpoſe, and ſeveral gentlemen having entered into a ſubſcription to fit it up in a proper way, Thelwall accepted the invitation.

" On the firſt and ſecond nights, which were on Monday and Wedneſday laſt, a party was formed, conſiſting of two or three *Clergymen*,

ſome Officers of the Militia (moſt of them *diſguiſed* in coloured clothes,) a fellow employed to look after the Emigrants, and a hanger-on or two (place expectants) of Government, who attempted to breed diſturbance *in* the Lecture Room, while a parcel of boys without, inſtigated by a Naval Officer, who offered them five guineas if they would pull down the houſe, co-operated with the detachment within, by all the noiſe and uproar they were capable of making. The diſturbers, however, were put to complete confuſion, by the firmneſs, general concord, and diſcreet good-humour of the company, and were, at the ſame time, made the objects of ſo much ridicule and paſtime, that they were obliged to abandon this mode of attack: and at the ſame time, a new entrance being made through an adjacent building, the noiſe of the people without was effectually excluded. The third night arrived, and a tremendous night it was. Upwards of 200 auditors, of both ſexes, and of all ages, moſtly very genteel people, aſſembled, and the Lecture proceeded for ſome time with the utmoſt tranquillity.

"Of all who had been remarked for their interruptions and expreſſions of diſapprobation on the former evening, Cammon Money was the only perſon preſent; who, when the lecture had been going on for about a quarter of an hour, took out his watch to obſerve the time, and immediately departed, not without ſome rude expreſſions of inſult and contempt to the perſon who kept the door. About five minutes after this a great diſturbance was heard at the door, and in ruſhed a deſperate banditti of about ninety ſailors, as their numbers ſtand

aſcertained by regular depoſitions. Theſe deſperadoes, drafted from the different ſhips of war in the roads, and armed with bludgeons and cutlaſſes, after having cut and knocked down the perſons who guarded the door, and even the mere gazers who happened to be loitering about, poured in among the audience with the moſt wild ferocity, dealing their blows indiſcriminately upon man, woman and child, who, totally unprepared for reſiſtance, were knocked down acroſs the benches with terrible wounds and bruiſes; and a ſcene of faſhion, gaiety, and pleaſure was inſtantly metamorphoſed into one of carnage and horror, of fractured heads, and garments covered over with blood. A general maſſacre ſeemed to be inevitable; no means either of defence or eſcape preſented themſelves; and the ruffians, not ſatisfied with knocking people down, reiterated their blows as they lay proſtrate at their feet.

" In the midſt of this ſcuffle, the lights were knocked out by ſome of the deſperadoes; and darkneſs and horror, ſhrieks and groans, claſhing of weapons and reſounding blows filled the room.

" At length ſome people without, tore open a pair of large folding doors, which had been formerly the only entrance to the room, but which had been faſtened up that night, for the reaſons before-mentioned, and the people began to ruſh out through the bludgeons of the murderers, ſome of whom purſued them to the walls, ſcattering and knocking them down; while others, recollecting at laſt, the principal object of their fury, began to cry out, " Where's the parſon? damn him, where's the parſon?" The Lecturer, however, had taken the opportunity

of the buſtle at the great door, which opened towards the ſea, to ruſh out at the ſmall door, by which the ruffians had entered. But the danger was not yet over. Six or ſeven of the ruffians were keeping watch at the door, and by theſe he was immediately ſeized, but it is remarkable, that the only violence they ſhewed towards their priſoner, was that of grappling very hard to prevent his eſcape, to effect which he ſtruggled very reſolutely.

"Two of the fellows, it ſeems, immediately went round to their companions, to inform them that the victim was ſeized; but in the mean time ſome of the town's-people collecting, and recognizing him, exclaimed, "It is Thelwall,—let us reſcue him!" and immediately ruſhing forward, knocked down the fellow who was on the right hand, and grappled with thoſe who were on the other ſide, endeavouring to drag him towards the ſea. At the ſame time, T. clapping a piſtol to the head of the moſt reſolute of them, and exclaiming, "Offer the leaſt violence, and you're a dead man!" the banditti let go their hold, and he eſcaped to the houſe of Mr. Norton."

[Among the perſons to whom I am indebted for this reſcue, I am happy to particulariſe Mr. T. Hurry Jun. and two of the younger Mr. Palmers; and it is but a tribute of juſtice to ſay, that I never ſaw any thing more gallantly executed in my life. The ruffians had all of them formidable bludgeons; the perſons who reſcued me, few in number, were moſt of them entirely unarmed, and none of them provided with any thing more than a ſmall walking ſtick; yet my name was no ſooner pronounced, than they ruſhed forward, with one mind, and with an enthuſiaſm

truly admirable, and grappling with the deſperadoes, diſentangled me from their gripe.]

" At length, the company being completely diſperſed, the ruffians procured a light, and roaring out " God ſave the king," with great ardour and exultation, proceeded to plunder and deſtroy; and hats, ſhawls and great coats in abundance, were carried on board the frigates from which they had been detached, together with general articles of value, which lay ſtowed up in a detached part of the warehouſe. As for the books from which the lecture was delivered, and which conſiſted of the " Roman Antiquities of Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus," " Plutarch's Lives," and Moyle's Treatiſe on " the Lacedemonian Government;" they were torn into a thouſand pieces by theſe new inquiſitors of literature and public inſtruction.

" The firſt perſons who eſcaped from this long conflict, applied immediately to the mayor, then at the aſſembly, for aſſiſtance to ſuppreſs the riot; but, inſtead of being attended to, one of them was threatened himſelf with commitment, and one of the perſons in company with this chief magiſtrate indecently exclaimed, and met with no rebuke, that " it ſerved the people right; and as for the damned lecturer, he hoped they would beat him to pieces." At length the mayor ſlightly anſwered to one of the applications that was made—" Well, lord Spencer may ſend the ſoldiers if he pleaſes." But as it is well known, that the military cannot act without the preſence of the magiſtrate, lord Spencer was obliged to decline making uſe of this verbal *permiſſion*.

" At length, the rioters having effectually gratified their vengeance againſt the Lecture Room,

began to mark out private houſes for deſtruction, and their ſhouts announced the very houſe in which the Lecturer had ſought for refuge as the next object of deſtruction. Their threats, however, were not put into immediate execution; and at half paſt nine o'clock, (an hour and a half later than uſual) the ſignal guns, which call all hands on board, relieved the town from the agitation in which it had been kept for near two hours.

"It is believed that in the darkneſs and confuſion, the ruffians actually murdered one of their own gang, and carried him juſt expiring on board. But except this be true, no actual murder was committed, though one fine youth of about fourteen, an only child of one of the inhabitants, has received contuſions on the head, of which, from all preſent ſymptoms, it is concluded he muſt certainly die.

[This is a miſtake, I believe; he is not the ſon of an inhabitant; but a viſitor in the town. In other reſpects the ſtatement is but too accurate; and ſo alarming are the ſymptoms, that I underſtand, the phyſician who attends him has declared, that he will not pronounce him out of danger theſe ſix weeks.]

"Forty-one perſons (I believe it ought to have been between thirty and forty) were very materially wounded; among whom are Chriſtopher Atkinſon, Eſq. M. P.——Hollock, Eſq. of Cambridge, one of the officers of the militia, and the collector of the cuſtoms at this place; many others, both men and women, have received ſlighter injuries. But, notwithſtanding the explicit depoſitions which have been made againſt ſome of the rioters, the mayor has refuſed to grant warrants againſt them.

"The inhabitants have had ſeveral meetings. It is reſolved to continue and countenance the Lectures, which will be repeated this evening. We may therefore expect to hear more from Yarmouth; but we hope for intelligence of a more peaceable kind."

This account is ſo far from being exaggerated, that it has been more than ſubſtantiated by the particular depoſitions of many credible witneſſes: but as the family of the Hurrys and other reſpectable inhabitants of the town, have taken up the affair with great ſpirit, and determine to make it a ſubject of legal enquiry, I forbear, in delicacy to the parties, to enter further into the minutiæ, till the Courts of Law have done their office.

The affair, however, was, as might be expected, made the ſubject of a ſort of paper war. The truth, as is generally the caſe, was too diſgraceful to the ariſtocratic party to be endured; and the moſt ſlanderous falſhoods were invented to cover a part of the infamy; and that the reader may be the better enabled to form an impartial judgment, I ſhall inſert theſe accounts in my pamphlet alſo; referring him for further confirmation of the preceding ſtatement, to the Cambridge Intelligencer, and the Bury and Norwich Poſt. The editor of which latter paper was himſelf a ſpectator of the whole tranſaction.

It is, however, neceſſary for me firſt to obſerve, that it was immediately reſolved by the perſons who had particularly countenanced the lectures, not to abandon them in conſequence of this outrage. They had obſerved nothing in the ſentiments I delivered, or the ſubjects I inveſtigated,

hoſtile to the peace or morals of ſociety; and they juſtly decided, that to be driven by bludgeons and cutlaſſes from enquiries, which neither the laws of ſociety nor thoſe of virtue prohibited, would be to ſurrender even the little liberty which is left us, and advertiſe to the world, that our oppreſſors have nothing to do but to cudgel us, and we ſhall of courſe ſubmit. We therefore determined to go on; and one of the inhabitants of the town (a man whoſe virtues and intrepidity, I will venture to prophecy, will reſcue his name from oblivion, and one day confer eſſential benefits upon ſociety) publiſhed the following addreſs.

"TO THE INHABITANTS OF YARMOUTH.

"FELLOW-TOWNSMEN,

"While force is uſed for argument, and brutality for reaſon, deſpotiſm may dictate, and tyrants may exult: but when paſſion is exhauſted, and prejudice put away, the ſtill, ſmall voice of conſcience will be heard, and atrocity be regarded with the horror it deſerves. The outrage againſt juſtice, againſt law, ſociety, and humanity, lately perpetrated, at THELWALL'S LECTURE, againſt our peaceable and well-diſpoſed Fellow-Town's-men, againſt their unoffending wives, ſiſters, and children, will be told with execration, and long remembered with abhorrence; and its authors (all of whom the unveiling hand of time will exhibit to public odium) will be claſſed amongſt the moſt deſpicable and cowardly aſſaſſins of the eighteenth century. While poſterity read the account, they will marvel, that ſome human beings ſhould be ſo immerſed in wickedneſs, as to attempt to vindicate, much leſs applaud the tranſaction. Yet, Fellow-Town's-men, ſtrange, inconſiſtent, and brutal as it may appear, there are perſons, even in this town, who applaud an action, which Robeſpierre himſelf would have bluſhed to have planned! A band of ruffians, armed with cutlaſſes, bludgeons, pipeſtaves, and other deſtroying weapons, knocked down the door-keeper, and burſt into a room, in which were two hundred perſons *peaceably* and *legally* aſſembled, and cut, beat down, and maimed men, women, and children promiſcuouſly; having, on their entrance, extinguiſhed the lights, that neither the ſeſineſs of ſex, the feebleneſs of age, nor the innocence

of childhood might check their ferocity: and only the burſting of the great doors prevented that aſſaſſination in the dark, which their employers and inſtigators even now contemplate with malignant ſatisfaction. Happy do I feel myſelf to announce, that after the ſtricteſt enquiry, I find not one of the company was murdered; though many are ſo much injured, as to render their recovery a work of time. It will, doubtleſs, afford ſatisfaction to many, to let them know the affair is in a train of legal inveſtigation. Look up, then, with confidence, to a period, not very diſtant, when ignorance and villainy ſhall ceaſe to triumph over legality and innocence; and "when the Wicked ſhall go away into Puniſhment, but the ſtedfaſt in Heart ſhall be made glad.

A TOWNSMAN.

"*Auguſt* 22, 1796.

"THELWALL's friends have requeſted him to go on with his Lectures: in conſequence of which, he will begin at half-paſt five o'clock this evening, and continue them on Wedneſday and Friday next, at the ſame hour. It is wiſhed the frequenters of the lectures may attend early, that by uniting firmneſs and diſcretion, the triumph of peaceful reaſon over brutal violence may be effectually eſtabliſhed."

The reader may, indeed, well be ſurpriſed to hear, that any human being ſhould applaud ſuch a tranſaction; but his wonder will increaſe when he hears, that ſome of theſe applauders were to be found among the members of the corporation themſelves, and that others were ſanctified with the holy ſables of religion—the meek preachers of the goſpel of peace, forbearance and mild morality. Nay, what is moſt curious, one gentleman of the former deſcription took upon himſelf to be loud in reprobation of one of the town's people, for "having dared (for the preſervation of his own life) twice to preſent a piſtol at a king's officer," whoſe cutlaſs was uplifted for his deſtruction! So that according to theſe loyal gentlemen, if the men who are hired with the people's money to defend the country, chuſe to turn their ſwords

like murderous aſſaſſins, againſt the breaſts of thoſe who feed them, and the magiſtrates do not chooſe to interfere for our preſervation, we are to ſubmit without reſiſtance to our fate—to ſtretch forth our unreſiſting necks, and exclaim, with loyal humility, "Cut our throats, good ſirs, we pray you, if it ſuits your pleaſure; for you are King's Officers, and licenſed therefore to murder us poor *ſubjects* when you chooſe."

The bill I have above quoted produced the following anſwer: which, if report ſays true, was produced by the inventive genius of a reverend divine of Norwich. I ſhall only obſerve, that the whole of the *narrative* is ſuch a monſtrous ſtring of falſhoods, as nobody but a prieſt could have put together: and the reader will obſerve, that the narrator himſelf confeſſes (ſo accurate, ſo certain is his intelligence) that he does not know whether the ſailor, whom he has conjured up, called out for a loyal ſong, *or* indulged himſelf in hiſſing.

"TO THE INHABITANTS OF GREAT YARMOUTH.

"FELLOW-SUBJECTS,

"A *virulent hand-bill* having juſt made its appearance, in which the voice of paſſion ſeems to prevail over the dictates of reaſon, permit one of your ſincere friends, though not one of your Fellow-Town's-men, to warn you againſt the injurious inſinuations which it contains. Were you to liſten to the flouriſhes of oratory, and the ravings of declamation, you would be taught to believe that a horrid plot had been formed to aſſaſſinate two hundred of the inhabitants of this town, who were *legally* and *peaceably* aſſembled in attendance on an innocent lecture. How far any aſſemblies can properly be termed *legal* and *peaceable*, where, as it is well known, in defiance, or in evaſion of the laws of the realm, ſuch doctrines are diſſeminated as have a manifeſt tendency to undermine the eſtabliſhed

government, and conſequently to unſheath the ſword of domeſtic diſcord, I leave it to the conſciences of thoſe who attend them to determine. That theſe doctrines may be concealed under *the maſk of hypocriſy*, is ſo far from diminiſhing, that it aggravates their criminality, and every loyal ſubject ſees with ſorrow and indignation, that thoſe pernicious opinions on Politics and Religion, which have ruined a neighbouring kingdom, carried fire and ſlaughter through the world, and produced a train of evils, from the recital of which humanity recoils with abhorrence, are ſtill preached in this happy country, *not indeed with the manly hardineſs of open effrontery*, but under *the ſpecious veil of claſſical alluſion*—a veil, by which folly and ignorance alone can be deceived. Such is the light in which Mr. THELWALL and his Lectures are generally conſidered by the many loyal inhabitants of this place. A perſon, whoſe conduct has rendered him ſo notorious, and whoſe encomiums on the preſent government of France, have led ſome people to ſuppoſe him a *penſioner* of that country, makes his appearance in this peaceable and loyal town, and adverti ſes his Lectures on "*The Practices of Governments.*" What is the natural reſult of ſuch a proceeding? A glow of loyal and virtuous indignation is excited. At one of his Lectures, a ſailor calls out for "God ſave the King!" *or* hiſſes what he conceives to be ſeditious language. He is inſulted and threatened to be turned out. He makes his retreat in the beſt manner he is able, and moved, perhaps, partly by perſonal and partly by public motives, he returns to his comrades, and forms a party *for the purpoſe, I believe, of ſeizing the Orator, and conveying him aboard a Man of War.* The party is formed, and at his next Lecture, they ruſh into the room, and make their way towards the Preacher. Falſe to the heroiſm he inculcates, he immediately ſinks down from his pulpit, and *himſelf* extinguiſhes the only lights in the room, thus ſaving his own perſon, and expoſing thoſe of his audience. A tumult then enſues, in which ſeveral people are wounded, and the accommodations of the Lecture-Room overturned. *Many people have ſince regretted, that inſtead of attacking the audience, the crew had not ſucceeded in their firſt deſign of ſecuring the Lecturer*, and preſſing him, for a time at leaſt, into the ſervice of his king. This account, I have reaſon to believe, is more accurate than any that has yet been given of a tranſaction, which has been repreſented (perhaps by one of the ſufferers) in ſo atrocious a light.

"Now, God forbid! that any man ſhould attempt to juſtify an outrage againſt the laws of his country, or to rejoice in the ſufferings of innocence."

[Compare this with the regret expreſſed above.—Phaugh! how I ſcent the holy fox in this unſavory odour of hypocriſy!]

Such a conduct would, indeed, be but too ſimilar to thoſe French models, which Democracy has held up to our imitation. But it is not inconſiſtent with reaſon or charity to maintain, that whatever riots take place at Lectures, the general ſpirit of which is ſo well underſtood, the Lecturer himſelf, and thoſe who ſanction his harangues, are to be conſidered as their primary cauſe. They draw down that vengeance on their heads, to which, however unjuſtifiable in its mode, a more loyal conduct could not poſſibly have expoſed them.

[Precious ſophiſt! He who dares to exerciſe his rights, contrary to the inclinations of his oppreſſors, is accountable for all the wickedneſs which thoſe oppreſſors, in the rancour of their hearts, may think fit to perpetrate againſt him!]

"This, my friends, is an important period. It is a time, in which no good ſubject ought to diſguiſe the real ſentiments of his heart. Let him avow them openly and firmly, but *with that charity which true religion inſpires.* While the audacious enemy threatens without, let him guard againſt the inſidious foe within; and let him mark thoſe who walk contrary to the ſpirit of the Britiſh conſtitution, that he may avoid their example. Let him not, however, be alarmed. The great majority of the people of this country, are attached to their religion and their king. Democracy raiſes its voice among us, and endeavours to gain converts to its cauſe, but its proſelytes are comparatively few. Would to God they were all re-converted by reaſon and religion, that they might expreſs their gratitude to heaven, for the bleſſings they enjoy under the Britiſh monarchy, and join hand and heart in its defence againſt the encroachments of the common enemy. If "England to herſelf will prove but true," ſhe may defy the world in arms, and preſerve her conſtitution inviolate to the end of time.

"One advantage, my friends, may perhaps be derived from Mr. THELWALL's viſit to this town. He may be conſidered as the touchſtone of political opinions. He draws the line between loyalty and diſaffection; for I defy any of his adherents, in whom the madneſs of democracy has not ſtifled the voice of conſcience, to lay their hands upon their hearts,

and ſay, that they are the real friends to their king, and the conſtitution of their country.

"With a perfect conviction of the general loyalty and good ſenſe of this town, and with a ſincere attachment to its inhabitants, I beg leave to ſubſcribe myſelf,

"*The determined Enemy of Sedition,*
"*And their faithful Friend and Fellow-Subject.*"

"Auguſt 23d, 1796.

"God ſave the King."

An abridgement of this bill was inſerted in the Norfolk Chronicle and the Norwich Mercury. The latter, however, had the candour readily to inſert the following anſwer in their enſuing paper.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE NORWICH MERCURY.

SIR,

It is evidently the duty of a newſpaper to be a vehicle of information, and as it is the buſineſs of the conductor to ſtate Facts as they are, according to the evidence he can collect, I take it for granted, that you will diſdain to make yourſelf a party to defamation: and that having been betrayed into a ſtatement in which my name is coupled with ſeveral direct falſhoods, you will be eager to do me juſtice, by inſerting my reply.

With reſpect to the narrative in general, I ſhall only obſerve, that it is abundantly diſproved by the oaths of credible witneſſes; but with reſpect to that part which relates to the putting out of the lights, I think myſelf called upon to ſay, not only that I did not put them out myſelf, but that, if the writer of the article had ever been in the Lecture Room, he muſt have known, that it was impoſſible for me to put them out, as part of them

were not only at a great diſtance from me, but alſo conſiderably out of arm's reach, in point of height; add to which, that the ruffian who committed this part of the outrage, has been identified by a ſervant of one of the Mr. Hurrys, who has depoſed that he ſaw him knock out the candles with his bludgeon; and that afterwards, when the great doors were burſt open, (by which alone the whole company was preſerved from maſſacre) he ſaw the ſame fellow dealing his blows upon the women who were ſhrieking and endeavouring to eſcape.

Aug. 31, 1796. JOHN THELWALL.

As the Norfolk Chronicle inſerted both the accounts, and left the reader to judge for himſelf between them, I did not think it neceſſary to take any notice of the circumſtance in that paper. All that is to be required of a public print is, that it ſhould be open to both ſides of the queſtion, in as much as relates to facts at leaſt. But if the reader is fond of audacious fiction, he may find in the Star, an account ſtill farther removed from truth than that of his "*faithful fellow ſubject*" above inſerted.

Their calumnies and miſrepreſentations did not, however, turn me from my courſe. I knew that it was my duty to perſevere; and that if I did not finiſh the courſe I had promiſed to deliver, I muſt ſhow myſelf unworthy to be a champion of the cauſe I had eſpouſed, and muſt expect to be attacked in the ſame brutal manner wherever I might afterwards attempt to lecture. I therefore

ſent a formal notice to the mayor, and continued my courſe to the end of the time propoſed.

This letter, which the reader will find inſerted in the addreſs to the people of Yarmouth, produced the following curious hand-bill.

"TO MR. JOHN THELWALL.

"SIR,

"Were you a man of the leaſt humanity or feeling, had you really the welfare of your country or the good of this town, in particular, at heart, your conduct, in the preſent ſtate of affairs, would have been widely different from what it is. In preference to a continuance of your Lectures, you would, for the ſake of the peace and quietneſs of the place, have retired with a conſciouſneſs of having acted the part of a wiſe and conſiderate man, whoſe eagerneſs to prevent tumult and diſorder was far ſuperior to the falſe ambition of higheſt applauſe as a public orator. But how do you act on this trying occaſion? Inſtead of taking ſteps that would have reflected honour on your underſtanding and ſenſibility, you write a moſt inſolent and menacing letter to the Chief Magiſtrate of the town, publiſh hand-bills, by no means calculated to appeaſe the paſſions, or convince the reaſons of your opponents, and rather than give up your favourite theme, ſavagely declare your determination of ſupporting your Lectures by force of arms. Humane reſolution! to riſk the plunging of both your country and countrymen in all the horrors of bloodſhed and murder. If ſuch be the principles of a Roman orator, in defence of French democracy, I thank my God, I am a poor, but loyal,

"ENGLISHMAN."

"*Yarmouth, 24th Auguſt*, 1796."

How far my readers will acquieſce in the reaſoning of this "Engliſhman;" and how far the conduct he recommends would have furniſhed

matter of triumphant exultation to the loyal advocates of anarchy and maſſacre, I muſt leave them to determine. I ſhall only obſerve, that againſt me, the *charge* of publiſhing hand-bills was juſt as true as the accuſation that I put out the lights, or, as the aſſertion that my letter to Sir Edmund Lacon was "inſolent and menacing." The hand-bill, ſigned "a Town's-man," was neither written by me, nor by my deſire. I am not a town's-man of Yarmouth; and I am not in the habit of aſſuming characters which do not belong to me. If I had written it, I ſhould certainly have ſigned it with my own name; for it would have done honour to any head or any heart by which it might have been dictated. But it appeared to me to be moſt conſiſtent with decorum, to take no public notice of the affair till my Lectures were concluded, when, of courſe, I ſhould be better able to decide as to the terms, in which it was proper for me to addreſs the public. In conformity with this reſolution, my Lectures were cloſed on Friday, 26th. I quitted Yarmouth the next day, and returned to the friendly, the intelligent, the beloved ſociety of Norwich; whence, on the Monday following, I wrote the following Addreſs, which has been printed and circulated in the town, where this unprecedented outrage was committed.

Inhabitants of Yarmouth!

Hitherto I have forborn to addreſs you on the ſubject of the late brutal Outrage; thinking it proper to reſerve my animadverſions till all

poſſibility of a repetition was paſſed away.—I therefore took no other notice of the inſult which your town, your police, your perſons, and the very character of the nation at large have received, than merely to apprize your Mayor of the contempt with which his authority had been treated by a lawleſs banditti, and formally to announce the continuance of my Lectures; that, if illegal, *he* might interrupt them by official interference; or, if legal, be prepared to protect me and my auditors againſt future depredations.

This intimation could not, however, eſcape the aſperſions of calumny: and an anonymous writer, who ſlanders the nation, by aſſuming the ſignature of "*Engliſhman*," accuſes me of "writing a moſt inſolent and menacing letter to the chief magiſtrate," and "ſavagely declaring my determination of ſupporting my Lectures by force of arms." But as of this letter I have, fortunately, preſerved a copy, properly atteſted, I ſhall here introduce it; that the public may not only judge how far it diſplays a diſpoſition "to plunge *both my country and countrymen* into all the horrors of bloodſhed and murder;" but, by comparing, in this inſtance, the accuſation with the demonſtrable fact, may be enabled to determine upon the degree of credit due to the narratives publiſhed on the other ſide of the queſtion. The letter is literally as follows:

"SIR,

"I underſtand it to be an eſtabliſhed principle of Britiſh juriſprudence, that the magiſtracy is bound to protect the citizens in the exerciſe of every function which the legiſlature has not prohibited. 'That which the law does not for-

bid, the law authorizes,' is a maxim familiar to every conſtitutional lawyer: and that the magiſtrate ſhould protect every man in the enjoyment of his lawful privileges, is evident from the very nature and inſtitution of magiſtracy. Nay more, as, in civilized ſociety, no unauthorized individual, or ſet of individuals, is to be permitted to take the law into his own hands, you muſt be aware, that it is the duty of the magiſtrate to protect even the ſuppoſed violator of the laws from tumultuous attack and murderous violence. It cannot, however, at the time, be a ſecret to you, that on Friday night laſt a peaceful aſſembly of two hundred people (men, women, and children) was attacked in my Lecture Room, by a deſperate banditti of about ninety perſons, habited like ſailors, and armed with bludgeons and cutlaſſes; who continued their depredations, uncontrouled, for conſiderably more than an hour, to the great danger of the lives of all, to the actual injury of the limbs of many, and to the conſiderable loſs of perſonal property.

"I think it, therefore, my duty, formally to apprize you, that, conſcious of the legality of my conduct, and *confiding the* FUTURE *diligence of the civil power*, I ſhall, this evening, at half paſt five o'clock, continue my Lectures; a proſpectus of which, for your more complete ſatisfaction, I take the liberty of preſenting to you. You will perceive, Sir, by the act of parliament, quoted in this proſpectus, that the law has made ſufficient proviſion to ſecure the admiſſion of magiſtrates into any place where they may ſuſpect that any thing illegal is going on. In Weſtminſter and in Norwich theſe hints have not been neglected. In both thoſe places, the Lec-

tures, I am here repeating, have been probed with the moſt ſcrutinizing obſervation: and, in both thoſe places, their admited legality has ſecured their protection.

"Truſting that, for the future, the ſame conſequence will follow in this place, I am, Sir, your's, in due reſpect to the peace and good order of ſociety,

"JOHN THELWALL."

Aug. 22, 1796.

"*To the right worſhipful the Mayor of Great Yarmouth.*"

Unprincipled effrontery may call this letter inſolent and menacing; and accuſe me of a determination "to plunge into the horrors of bloodſhed and murder," becauſe I did not flee from the town as ſoon as the arm of violence was upreared againſt me: but I truſt, that the line of conduct I purſued, has proved at once my eagerneſs to prevent commotion, and my determination not to be ſcared, by kidnappers and aſſaſſins, from the exerciſe of thoſe rights, of which it has not *yet* pleaſed a corrupt and tyrannical adminiſtration to deprive us. At the ſame time, I have left the Lectures to ſpeak for themſelves, to the end, without inflammation on one hand, or conceſſion on the other, that thoſe who had the curioſity, the juſtice, or the *courage* to enquire or judge for themſelves, might perceive how far the ſentiments I promulgated, juſtified, in *any moral ſenſe*, a line of conduct in my antagoniſts which *the outraged laws of the country* muſt condemn and puniſh.

Yes, fellow-citizens, the laws muſt puniſh! I ſpeak not in the ſpirit of revenge: "vengeance

is not mine;" it conſtitutes no part of my morality: nor ſhall I, for my individual part, appeal to any tribunal but that of public opinion. But if *thoſe to whom the guardianſhip of the laws is entruſted*, do not make the offenders reſponſible for this outrage,—law, and civil juſtice, and government are no more; anarchy is ſanctioned by magiſtracy itſelf; pillage and aſſaſſination become the order of the day; our houſes are no ſanctuaries; our perſons have no ſecurity; every man is warned that the dagger is at his throat, and that he muſt be prepared, as in times of moſt ſavage barbariſm, by perſonal force to defend himſelf againſt perſonal violence.

Think not this language too ſtrong for the occaſion: the confeſſions of the vindicators of this outrage juſtify it to its utmoſt ſyllable. For my own part, I affirm, that the account, inſerted in the Courier of Monday laſt, is correct and faithful; and I believe no man of credit or reſpectability will ſign his name to a contradiction of any circumſtance there affirmed—unleſs, indeed, upon accurate examination, the perſons, ſeriouſly hurt, ſhould prove to be rather more or leſs than the preciſe number ſpecified. But ſuppoſe, for a moment, that the handbill, publiſhed Auguſt the 23d,—ſigned "The determined Enemy of Sedition," &c. an abridgement of which has ſince found its way into the Norwich Mercury"—inſtead of being, as it is, an impudent farrago of deſigning and atrocious falſehoods, were true from beginning to end, what is the reſult? Why, that "Lectures on Claſſical Hiſtory" are illegal, becauſe the *crimes* of Greek and Roman tyrants (according to this curious vindicator of things as they are) bear ſo ſtrong a reſemblance to the *virtues* of our

preſent government, that to expoſe the former, is a libel (" under the ſpecious veil of claſſical alluſion") upon the latter; and therefore it is to be " regretted, that the crew" (a banditti of ninety armed ruffians!) " had not ſucceeded in *their firſt deſign* of ſecuring the lecturer, and preſſing him, for a time at leaſt, into the ſervice of his king!"

And how does this " faithful ſubject," as he calls himſelf, know what was the " firſt deſign" of this banditti? Is he principal, accomplice, or confidential counſellor in this deſperate project to kidnap, tranſport, perhaps *murder*, an individual, who, if he had violated any law, might eaſily have been brought to juſtice, without making the captain of a preſſgang attorney-general againſt him, and empannelling eighty or ninety ſailors for his jury? If this advocate for kidnapping, this inſtigator to the repetition of atrocities, hitherto unparalleled, really feels a confidence in the facts and arguments he has advanced, let him ſtand forward, by name, and avow them; inſtead of muffling himſelf from view, in the *ſable cloak* of ſecrecy, and ſtriking, like the ruffians he vindicates, in the dark. Such an avowal might lead, perhaps, to further diſcoveries relative to the project—ſo much boaſted of by perſons who pretend to be as well acquainted with the intentions of the banditti as himſelf—of impreſſing me, not into the ſervice of his majeſty, but of his majeſty's good ally, the empreſs—of carrying me on board a Ruſſian ſhip, and tranſporting me, perhaps, to Siberia.

O madneſs of profligate malice!—And are theſe the extenuations upon which our enemies have the impudence to reſt their cauſe? They did not intend, it ſeems, " to murder two hundred of

the inhabitants of the town:"—they only meant, they ſay, to kidnap the man who had the audacity (or, as they ſometimes call it, the "hypocriſy!") to illuſtrate, by facts of ancient hiſtory, "The Principles of Legiſlation, and the Practices of Governments;" to drag him, with mercileſs violence, from every endearing tie of relative connection, bury him in a floating hell, or tranſport him to the inhoſpitable extremities of a barbarous empire; there, far from the tears of a helpleſs wife, and the cries of his little infants, to ponder, at leiſure, upon *the equal protection, and equal juſtice, of the boaſted laws of Britain!*

Germs of my love! ſweet nurſlings of my care! know ye the unequal deſtiny ye are born to?—Laws are decreed, and halters are prepared to puniſh you for the leaſt offence which penury, or intemperate paſſion, might provoke; but your father may be ſeized by the rude hand of violence, and your helpleſs infancy be deprived of its ſole ſupport, while ye, poor little orphans! ſtretch forth your hands in vain, and the ſhameleſs aſſaſſins glory in their guilt—ſecure in the audacious plea, that they meant to murder no man but myſelf. But no, poor innocents! ye may yet ſport in happy ignorance; and when the light of knowledge beams on your riper years, ye ſhall reap the harveſt of your father's toil, and enjoy the protection of juſt and equal laws!

In the mean time, let Britons reflect upon their ſituation: for not over me alone, but over the nation, the bludgeon of maſſacre is reared. If I could be kidnapped, or deſtroyed in this manner, with impunity, what individual is ſecure?—The cruel ſyſtem of preſs warrants has long been de-

cried by every humane and rational man; but, if they can thus be made inſtruments of political oppreſſion and revenge, *lettres de cachet*, and all the deteſtable appendages of that old deſpotiſm we have been ſo long labouring to reſtore in France, were mild, humane and moderate.—I am obnoxious to the preſent adminiſtration.—Nature, I thank thee that thou haſt made me ſo!—and while they act upon their preſent principles, may the blood flow back to my recreant heart, may mankind loathe, and all animal exiſtence ſhun me, when I ceaſe to be obnoxious to them!—for their ambition has fallen like a peſtilence on man and beaſt, has undone my country, has deſolated Europe; and the four quarters of the globe have groaned under their domination!—But who can anſwer that he may not, ere long, become obnoxious alſo to the ſame, or to ſome other adminiſtration, and be dragged by their myrmidons on board an Engliſh or a Ruſſian man of war? To aſſail the life of *the king* is *only* hanging, drawing, and quartering; but, according to theſe *loyal anarchiſts*, to fall under ſuſpicion of ſatirizing *the miniſter* by hiſtoric fact or "claſſical alluſion," is to be inſtant tranſportation and death.

To the petty falſehoods in this farrago of profligacy and folly, I ſhall not deign a diſtinct anſwer. Some of them contradict themſelves; and others have been already contradicted by the oaths of credible witneſſes; whoſe teſtimony, I underſtand, will be ſhortly publiſhed *in a court of law*. The ſtuff about my putting out the lights myſelf is ſo contemptible, that I might reſt ſatisfied with obſerving, that my crime has always been, not the extinction, but the diffuſion of light. The fact is, every individual who has ever been

at the lectures knows, that it would have been impoſſible for *me* to have put out the lights, had I been ſo diſpoſed; ſome of them being conſiderably out of *arm's reach* in point of height, and nearly at the oppoſite end of the room. It is the misfortune of theſe *gentlemen* not only to be deſtitute of all regard to truth, but of that diſcretion alſo, which might prompt them to print only ſuch falſehoods as are not eaſily detected. I leave them, however, to their inventions; while I enjoy the proud confidence of having diſcharged my duty with firmneſs and ſincerity.

When the miniſter and his party thought fit, by an act of the legiſlature, to prohibit me from lecturing any longer "on the laws, conſtitution, government, and policy of *theſe* realms," I determined to lecture for the future on the laws, conſtitution, government, and policy of *other* realms; conſcious that the principles of truth may be as well illuſtrated by the facts of one hiſtory, as of another: nor do I ſee any more "hypocriſy," or want of "manly hardineſs," in this, than there would be in continuing to wear one's ſhirt and breeches, when government had ſtripped one of one's coat and waiſtcoat. Unawed by the threats of power, unabaſhed by the fears or prejudices of my fellow-citizens, I have perſevered in this new path, and have proved that the empire of reaſon, though invaded, is not deſtroyed: and when, in the laſt paroxyſm of deſpair, tyrannical Faction appealed to brutal Violence, diſdaining alike to imitate, or yield to, the turbulence of my opponents, I have continued my courſe to the period I had propoſed; and am now, in obedience to the calls of duty, and the invitations of friendſhip, preparing to repeat, in other circles, the important truths

which oppreſſors may dread, but nations will rejoice to hear.

Inhabitants of Yarmouth! lay theſe things to heart, and awake to the true intereſts of humanity!—Let thoſe among you who attended my lectures, bear teſtimony to the doctrines I have delivered. The tools of corruption and the ſupporters of prieſtcraft will naturally be averſe to the expoſition of ſuch facts as I have felt it my duty to ſelect; and ſome perſons, even of independent and ingenuous minds, may not be prepared to aſſent to all my principles; for, in the wide ocean of political inquiry, how few can ſteer exactly in the ſame track!—but the moſt prejudiced of my hearers cannot deny, that I have diligently inculcated the doctrines of peace, of public and private virtue, of humanity, juſtice, and benevolence.

Liberty, I confeſs, is the deity of my conſtant adoration; becauſe, I am convinced, that it is by Liberty alone that theſe principles can be promoted. Feeling this conviction, it is not the imputation of jacobiniſm, nor the terror of bludgeons and cutlaſſes, that ſhall drive me from my courſe. For defence from the latter, I muſt truſt, as heretofore, to my preſence of mind, my courage, the zeal of my friends, and my own good fortune; and as for the former, I can only repeat the ſentiment, lately delivered among you, in my digreſſion on the fate of Poland,—"If, by Jacobiniſm be meant the ſyſtem of blood and terror, eſtabliſhed under the dominion of Roberſpierre, there is no ariſtocrat in the nation, who deteſts Jacobiniſm with half the ardour which I feel and cheriſh:—but, if by Jaco-

biniſm, be intended an attachment to the principles of Liberty—O that I had been a Pole to have died for Jacobiniſm, and have manured my country with my blood, when I had no longer any other means to do it ſervice!"

JOHN THELWALL.

Norwich, Aug. 29, 1796.

Such are the circumſtances of this outrage, as far as they have yet come to light, on the one hand, or as, on the other, the legal enquiry, at this time pending, renders it proper to deſcend into particulars. A great body of evidence is collected, bringing home many of the facts to ſome of the actors, and involving others in very ſtrong ſuſpicion: but this I leave to its proper place, and dwell only upon ſuch circumſtances as are neceſſary to give the public a general idea of the atrocity of the attack, and to clear my own character from the aſperſions of ruffians, who, having been *twice* diſappointed in their attempts to murder myſelf, in the deſperation of their malice, endeavour to aſſaſſinate my fame. I truſt, however, that both my life and my reputation will weather the ſtorm of their perſecutions; but certainly, the latter ſhall never be ſullied, nor the former preſerved, by a baſe deſertion of the principles I have eſpouſed, or the voluntary neglect of any opportunity of tearing off the maſk of ſtate hypocriſy, and expoſing the horrors of tyranny and corruption. And O! that I could rouſe the whole intellect of the country to join with me in this important labour! There is no

other way to meliorate the condition of mankind. Miſery is diffuſed through too large a circle—it is too various— too univerſal to be any longer relieved by the petty detail of private benevolence, or the inſolent oſtentation of *public charities*. Such palliatives belong to ages of comparative happineſs: the evil muſt now be relieved *en maſſe*. And how is this to be effected, but by the general diffuſion of information? The fabrics of oppreſſion will fall. The cement is exhauſted; and already do the disjointed ſtones begin to totter. Be calm—be watchful and you ſhall ſee them fall—fall by their own weight. They want not a ſingle hand to puſh them down. But if mankind be not informed—if a body of juſt principles be not widely diffuſed, what ſcenes of deſolation may ariſe out of the ruins. Not he then who prevents, but he who promotes, diſcuſſion, is the friend of peace and good order. It is the buſineſs of the philanthropiſt at all times, but in ſuch times as theſe in particular, to inſtruct, becauſe to inſtruct is to humaniſe mankind. Let us ſeize, then, every opportunity which new laws, and new conſtructions of the law, have yet left open to imbue the minds of our fellow citizens with the principles of juſtice, ſocial order and legiſlation; and, though attorney generals may impeach, and gangs of hired ruffians may aſſail, let us not be afraid to wield the keen ſword of truth, and advance the ſtrong ſhield of reaſon. Thus armed, we ſhall be ſuperior to the malice of our enemies; and death or life be alike the aſſurance of victory. The worſt that can befal us in the ſtruggle is better than the beſt we can enjoy without it. Once only we can die: and that once is certain. But glorious ſhall it be for that man, and happy for

his poſterity, who falls, however early, in the brave ſtruggle of liberty, rather than prolong a wretched exiſtence in ſlavery and diſhonour, and wait the conſuming tortures of diſeaſe. In this ſtruggle of reaſon againſt oppreſſion, I repeat it—if we diſcharge our duty, the *victory* is certain: the *price* with which it muſt be purchaſed, alone is doubtful. If, in the late *deſcent of Britiſh Pirates upon the Britiſh coaſt*, I had been kidnapped or murdered, as the ruffians deſigned, tyranny and corruption would not have had an enemy the leſs. My name and my ſuffering, my aſhes, or my empty tomb, would have been loud and eloquent in the condemnation of the preſent ſyſtem: the tears of my widowed wife, and the cries of my little orphans, would have done more than lectures on claſſical hiſtory can hope to do; and outraged humanity would have ſhrieked through our ſtreets for vengeance. But blood-gorged oppreſſion, drunk with its own ambition, and ſtung to madneſs by reiterated diſappointments, ruſhes headlong to its own deſtruction!

The tranſaction I have narrated ſurpaſſes, it is true, in point of daring wickedneſs, any thing that has yet been attempted by the tools of *ariſtocratic Anarchy;* but in its *principle* there is nothing new. "God ſave the king", it is true, has been made the war-hoop of tumult and civil commotion; but Birmingham and Mancheſter, and the theatres of Edinburgh and Lynn, are not yet forgotten. The *hired protectors* of the country have aſſailed the people with brutal violence, and replied to peaceful argument with the ſabre and the bludgeon, while the magiſtrates have looked on with indifference, unwilling, or unable, to enforce the laws of order and pro-

tection. But has not Mr. Windham, from the Treaſury Bench, publicly upheld the anarchic doctrine of exerting an authority beyond the law?* Our coaſts have been ravaged by his Majeſty's ſailors, and the plunder has been carried on board his Majeſty's ſhips, to be divided, in triumph, among the *domeſtic invaders*; But have not our houſes been previouſly plundered by his Majeſty's meſſengers of books, prints, and manuſcripts of all deſcriptions from the novel and the love ſonnet to the phyſiological diſſertation? And have not the privy council refuſed to reſtore the plunder to its rightful owners?† Oh! Juſtice! Juſtice! thy ſword, it ſeems, is yet keen enough,

* This is not the only inſtance, in which the language and deportment of the War Secretary have been ſuch, as might eaſily be *miſconſtrued* into a commendation of anarchic violence, as the debates of the three laſt ſeſſions, and the facts, recorded in Holcroft's "Letter," &c. ſufficiently prove. I will add one inſtance more, on the authority of two witneſſes, whoſe teſtimony, in this reſpect, it is difficult to diſcredit. During the Election at Norwich, I was aſſaulted in an outrageous manner, in the Hall, in the preſence of ſeveral magiſtrates, (when no perſons but the corporation, and their immediate dependents were preſent) by a *dignitary of the Church*, ſeveral ruffian *peace officers*, and ſome *butchers*, apparently brought up ſtairs for the purpoſe. Theſe loyal Windhamites, after knocking me twice down, deſpoiled me of my hat, in the ſcuffle, which was preſerved as a precious trophy, and hung up in the Hall, like the *Spolia Opima* in the Temple of *Jupiter Feretrius*. Mr. Windham, converſing upon the affair the next day, and ſpeaking of me with great bitterneſs, is ſaid to have fixed his eye upon the hat, and pointing to the tenterhooks on which it was ſtretched, to have exclaimed, with great emphaſis.—"There's a *Part!!!*" Much has been ſaid of Mr. W's. talents, his capacity, and his attainments: but if this anecdote be true, his mind is as degraded, as his politics are deteſtable. Shylock, wetting his knife, preſents not an image of more ſanguinary depravity.

† See Correſpondence with the Privy Council, at the end of the firſt vol. of the Tribune.

when greatneſs would have thee ſtrike! But what is become of thy boaſted equal ballance!

But we Reformers ought not to be protected. Laws were not made *for* us—but *againſt* us! We "have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them!" We reaſoners—we members of correſponding ſocieties, and lecturers on claſſical hiſtory—we are turbulent, dangerous men!—commotioniſts and incendiaries!—promoters of tumult!—foes to the public peace!—patience! patience! when will daring falſhood learn to bluſh? Have we not met in our thouſands, and our tens of thouſands? yet when did *we* ever make the leaſt diſturbance? Did we not meet in immenſe crowds at Chalk Farm, and did any tumult enſue?—on the contrary, did not the miniſter proſecute us for high treaſon, for quoting paſſages from the ſtate trials, and conſtitutional maxims from the very ſtatute books of the realm? And was it not proved by the witneſſes for the crown, themſelves, that we were advocates for peace and reaſon? Did we not meet again, in countleſs multitudes, in St. George's fields, at Copenhagen Houſe, and in Mary-la-bonne fields? And did we not reaſon like men, reſolve like Britons, and depart again to our reſpective homes, without even the ſlighteſt commotion or diſturbance? But when—when I ſay, has a church and king-mob been aſſembled without perpetrating crimes and atrocities? When have the tools, the hirelings, the dupes of ariſtocratic corruption met, in a tenth, a hundredth part of the numbers above alluded to, without marking their progreſs with pillage, brutal violence, bloodſhed, and deſolation?

Britons, awake to truth and reaſon! Learn to diſtinguiſh between the real, and pretended friends of peace and good order. Rulers of the land, awake to timely reflection! Abandon the ſyſtem of terror and perſecution. Let juſtice be more ſteadily adminiſtered; and no longer, by ſheltering the perpetrators of *loyal* outrages, (for ſo is the word abuſed!) "teach bloody inſtructions, which being taught, return to plague the inventors."

Bawſey, near Lynn, Sept. 7, 1796.

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